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CEREBUS GOING HOME 7

$2.25 USA • $3.50 CANADA • £1.50 UK

238
JAN

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238
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CEREBUS
NO. 238 JANUARY 1999

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BANGED UP

I'm probably "telling tales out of school" here, which is the reason that I've reprinted Eddie's ad for his *Bacchus* trades on the inside back cover. Please send loads of money to Chris Staros for all these great books and maybe Eddie will forgive me for this:

Bloody Eddie Campbell and I were having a chat on the phone a while back, and he mentioned one of those marvelous comedic bits which he does in the backgrounds of his Baccchus stories that he decided to leave *out* of "Banged Up," the great Bacchus-goes-to-prison sequence he just wrapped up a while back.

This all takes place in the background. One prisoner walks into another prisoner's cell and says to him, "I'm lookin' fer summit to read. 'Ere. Wot's this?" The second prisoner says, "It's called *The Comics Journal*. It's mostly interviews with cartoonists and such." First prisoner walks out, flipping through it. "Cartoonists, eh? Well, that should be good for a larf or two." The story proceeds on its merry way, and the next time we see the first prisoner he's hanged himself in his cell.

I laughed 'til I cried.

Sorry, Eddie. I had to tell.

Please, folks. Send Chris lots of money to get me off the hook here.

GOING HOME

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(Cerebus 232 to Cerebus 265)

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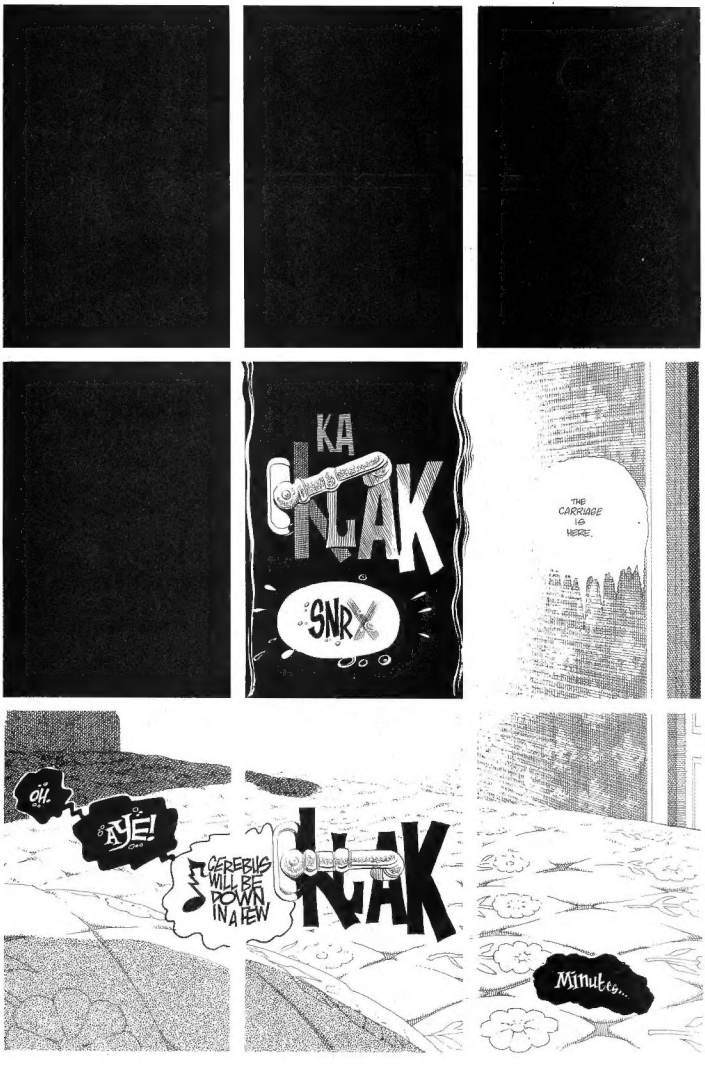
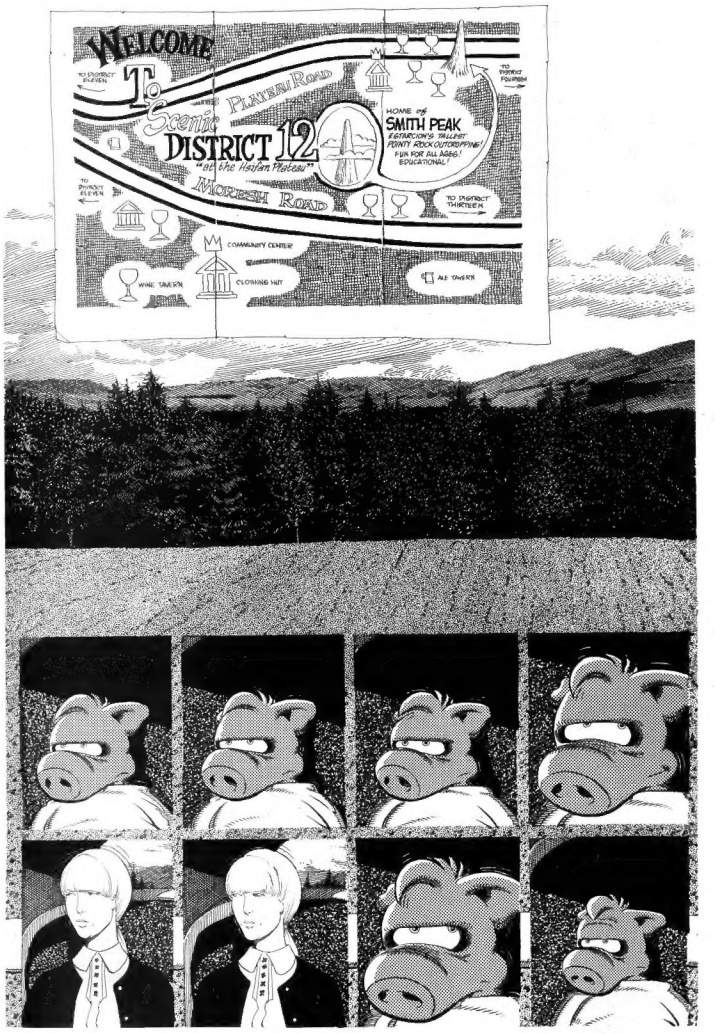
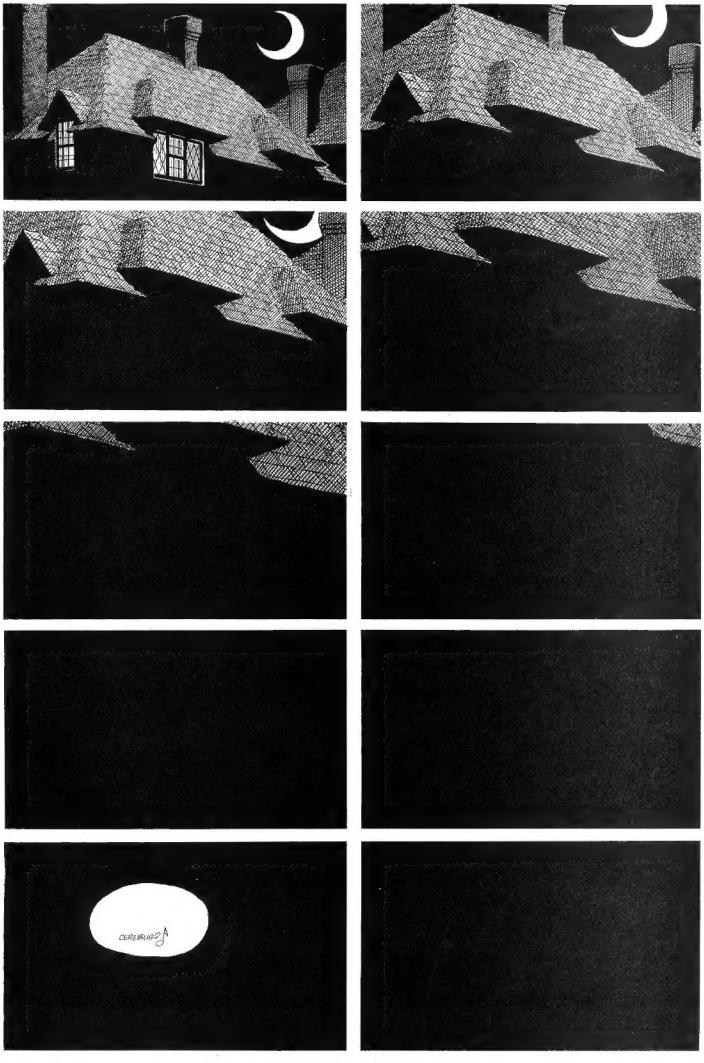

KA
KLAK
SNRX
THE CARRIAGE IS HERE.
OH.
AYE!
CEREBELLS WILL BE DOWN IN A FEW
KLAK
Minutes...

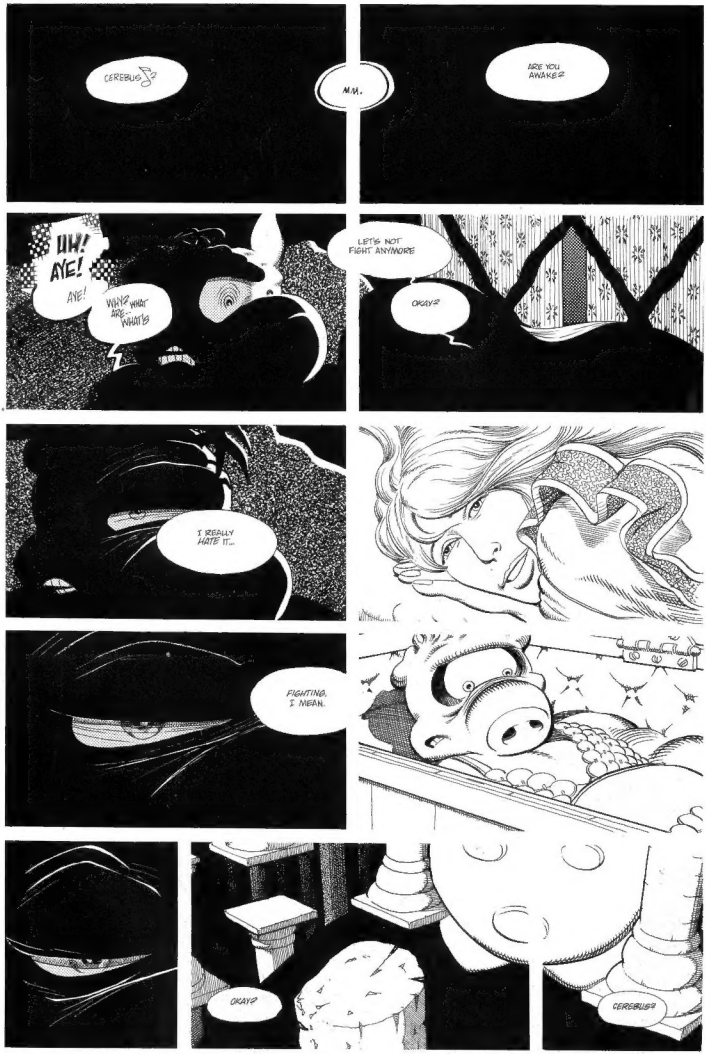

WELCOME
To Scenic
DISTRICT 12
"at the Hafan Plateau"
PLATEAU ROAD
MORESH ROAD
TO DISTRICT ELEVEN
TO DISTRICT FOURTEEN
TO DISTRICT ELEVEN
TO DISTRICT THIRTEEN
HOME OF
SMITH PEAK
EGYPTION'S TALLEST PEAK! ROCK CLIMBING! FUN FOR ALL AGES! EDUCATIONAL!
COMMUNITY CENTER
WINE TAVERN
CLOTHING HUT
ALE TAVERN

SO!
CEREBUS HAS THIS LITTLE BOX OF CHOCOLATES AND ALL THE WAY OVER TO CHERIE'S HOUSE CEREBUS IS HIDING IT, IN CASE - YOU KNOW ONE OF THE GUYS SEES IT
ARE YOU SURE CEREBUS DIDN'T TELL YOU THIS ONE ALREADY?
AND THE WHOLE TIME CEREBUS IS PRACTICING WHAT HE'S GOING TO SAY
POSITIVE.
SO...
IF HER FATHER ANSWERS THE DOOR, CEREBUS WILL SAY, "GOOD MORNING, MR. HAYDEN! COULD YOU GIVE THESE TO CHERIE AND TELL HER THEY'RE FROM CEREBUS? THANK YOU!"
CRUNCH CRUNCH
AND IF HER MOTHER ANSWERS THE DOOR CEREBUS WILL SAY "GOOD MORNING, MRS. HAYDEN! COULD YOU GIVE THESE TO CHERIE AND TELL HER THEY'RE FROM CEREBUS? THANK YOU!"
CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH
AND IF HER SISTER ANSWERS THE DOOR CEREBUS WILL SAY, "GOOD MORNING, LYNN! COULD YOU GIVE THESE TO CHERIE AND TELL HER THEY'RE FROM CEREBUS? THANK YOU!"
AND IF HER OTHER SISTER ANSWERS THE DOOR, CEREBUS WILL SAY "GOOD MORNING, BONNIE! COULD YOU GIVE THESE TO CHERIE AND TELL HER THEY'RE FROM CEREBUS? THANK YOU!"
THAT'S SO CUTE...
SO WHAT HAPPENED?

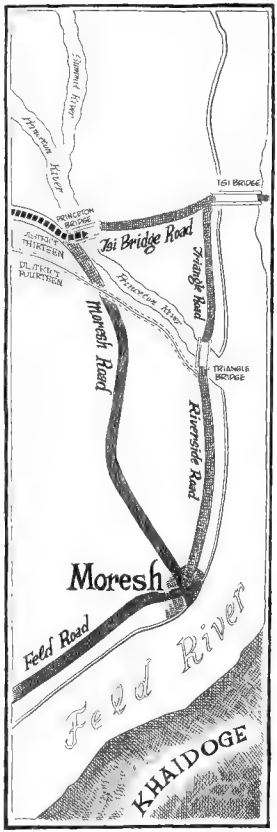
CHERIE ANSWERED THE DOOR
HAHAHAHA
SO CEREBUS SAYS
GOOD MORNING
WAY TOO LOUD! LIKE THAT
WAIT! IT GETS BETTER!
CEREBUS SHOVES THE LITTLE BOX OF CHOCOLATES INTO HER HANDS AND SAYS
COULD YOU GIVE THESE TO CHERIE AND TELL HER THEY'RE FROM CEREBUS? THANK YOU!
SNORT
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
AND THEN!
CEREBUS RUNS AWAY!
LIKE A THIEF WITH HIS PANTS ON FIRE!

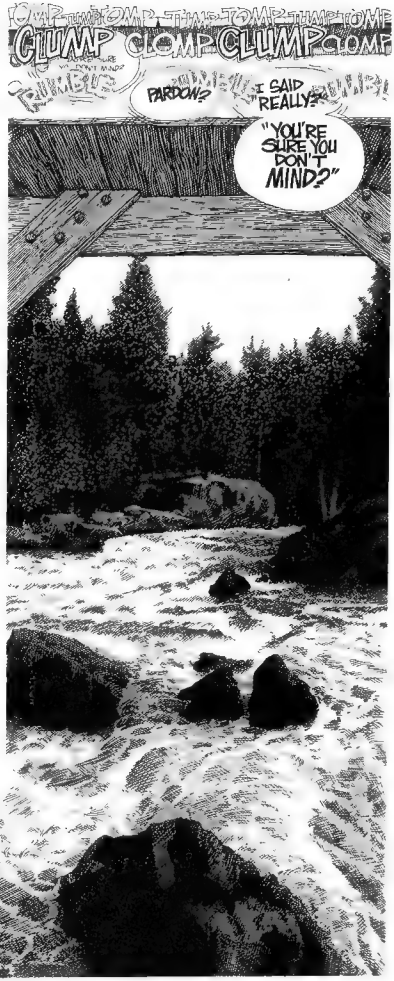
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
CRUNCH CRUNCH
JAKA?
HA HA HA
WHAT?
CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH
YOU AREN'T GOING TO PEE IN YOUR PANTIES ARE YOU?
HURRY!
HURRY, HURRY, HURRY!
HA HA HA SHUT UP

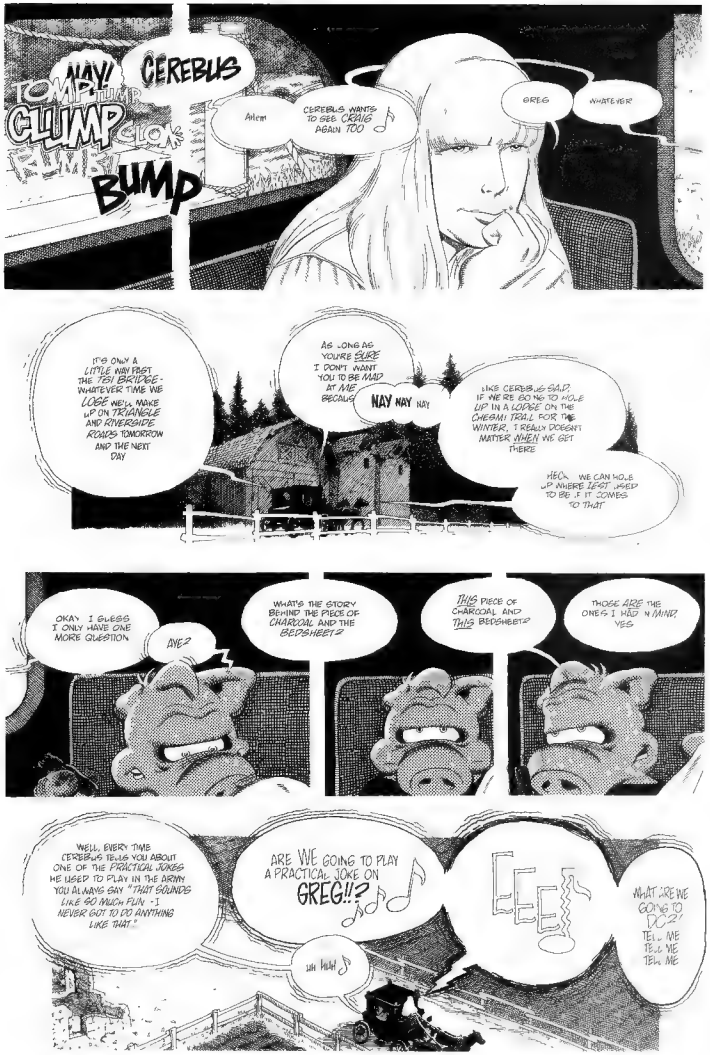

CERUBUS

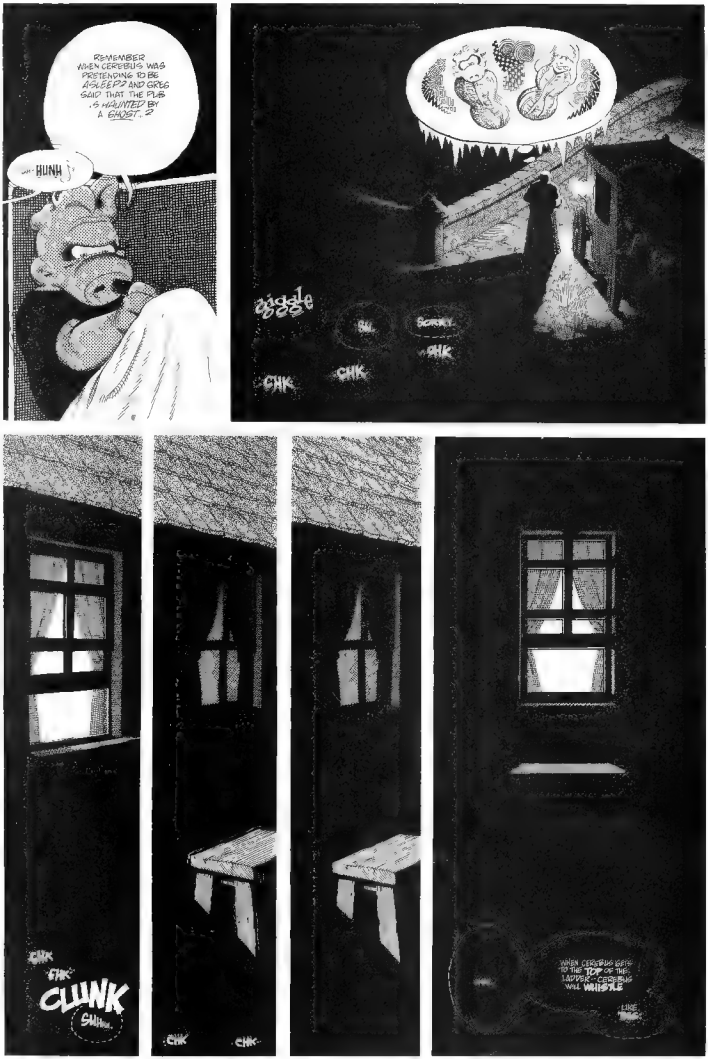

CEREBUS?
MM.
ARE YOU AWAKE?
UH! AYE!
AYE!
WHAT? WHAT ARE WHAT?
LET'S NOT FIGHT ANYMORE
OKAY?
I REALLY HATE IT...
FIGHTING, I MEAN.
OKAY?
CEREBUS?

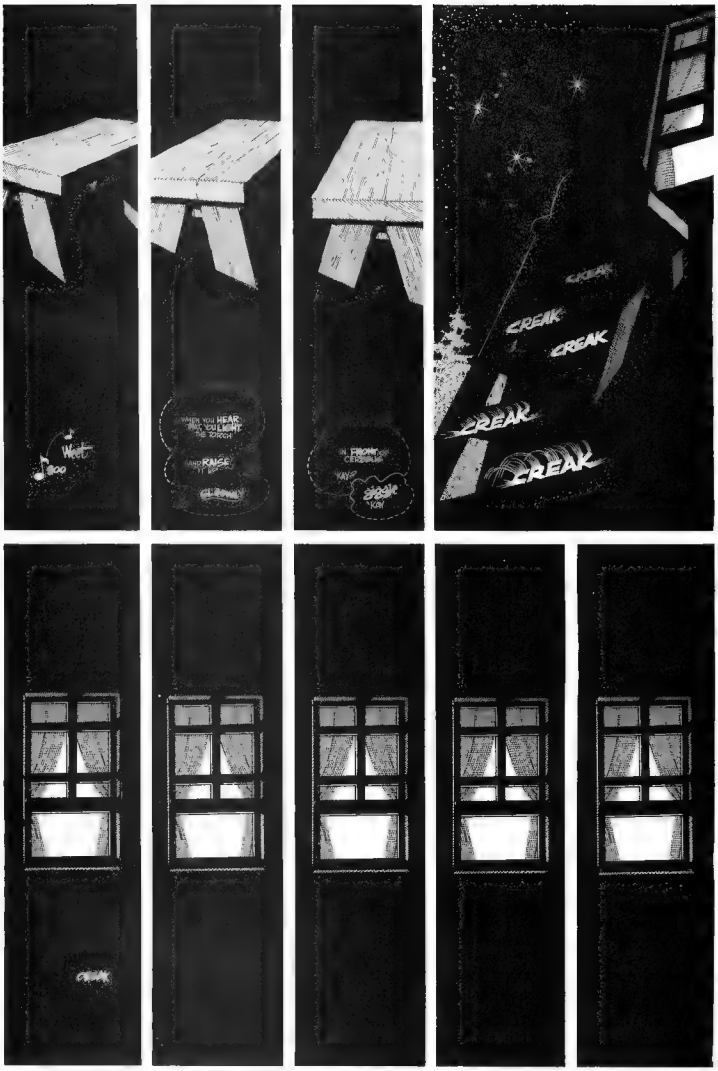
AIE
NO
NO MORE FIGHTING
REALLY?
MMMM
OH GOOD!
MWAH
MWAH
GOOD NIGHT!
GRRR


Tsi Bridge
Tsi Bridge Road
Triangle Road
Moresh Road
Riverside Road
Feld Road
Moresh
Feld River
KHAIDOGE


CLUMP CLOMP CLUMP CLOMP
I SAID PARDON?
"YOU'RE SURE YOU DON'T MIND?"

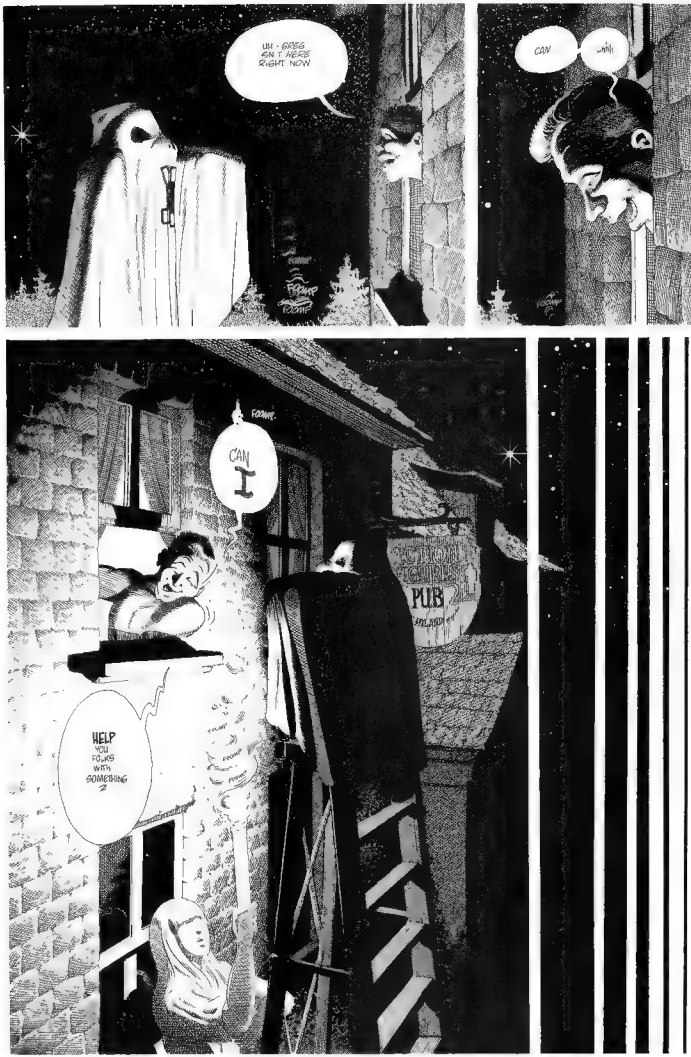

NAY!
CEREBUS
TOMP
CLUMP
CLOMP
BUMP
Ahem
CEREBUS WANTS TO SEE CRAIG AGAIN TOO
GREG
WHATEVER
IT'S ONLY A LITTLE WAY PAST THE TEN LANDFORE - WHATEVER TIME WE LOSE WE'LL MAKE UP ON TRIANGLE AND RIVERSIDE ROADS TOMORROW AND THE NEXT DAY
AS LONG AS YOU'RE SURE I DON'T WANT YOU TO BE MAD AT ME BECAUSE
NAY NAY NAY
LIKE CEREBUS SAID, IF WE'RE SO WE TO HOLE UP IN A LODGE ON THE CHEGWI TRAIL FOR THE WINTER, I REALLY DOESN'T MATTER WHEN WE GET THERE
HECK, WE CAN HOLE UP WHERE LEAST USED TO BE, IF IT COMES TO THAT
OKAY, I GUESS I ONLY HAVE ONE MORE QUESTION
AYE?
WHAT'S THE STORY BEHIND THE PIECE OF CHARCOAL AND THE BEDSHEET?
THIS PIECE OF CHARCOAL AND THIS BEDSHEET?
THOSE ARE THE ONES I HAD 'N MIND
YES
WELL, EVERY TIME CEREBUS TELLS YOU ABOUT ONE OF THE PRACTICAL JOKES HE USED TO PLAY IN THE ARMY YOU ALWAYS SAY "THAT SOUNDS LIKE SO MUCH FUN - I NEVER GOT TO DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT."
ARE WE GOING TO PLAY A PRACTICAL JOKE ON GREG!!?
EEE
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? TELL ME TELL ME TELL ME
UH HUH!


REMEMBER WHEN CERBERUS WAS PRETENDING TO BE ASLEEP?? AND GREG SAID THAT THE PUB IS HAUNTED BY A GHOST. 2
HUNH
ZIGGLE ZOOP
BU
SCRRK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CHK
CLUNK
SHRK
CHK
CHK
WHEN CERBERUS GETS TO THE TOP OF THE LADDER - CERBERUS WILL WHISTLE
LIKE THIS


Woo!
Boo
WHEN YOU HEAR THE WOLF HE SINGS
AND RINSE IT OFF
GLORIOUS!
FROM CROSSING
YAY!
SASSIE YOU
CREAK
CREAK
CREAK
CREAK
CREAK
CREAK

Weak
300
FOOMP
FOOMP
FOOMP
FOOMP
FOOMP
FOOMP
SKKKKK

GREG
GREG
GREG


UH - GREG AIN'T HERE RIGHT NOW
KNOCK KNOCK
CAN
I
FOOT.
CAN I
PUB
HELP YOU FOLKS WITH SOMETHING ?

WOW! THE PRINCESS OF PALNU! RIGHT HERE! IN MY PUB!
YES. WE'VE ESTABLISHED. THAT
YOU WERE SAYING? ABOUT GREG?
OH GREG!-- RIGHT!
YEAH, HE'S UP NORTH SOMEWHERE- OPENING THREE NEW ACTION FIGURES PUBS
THE MOTHERS ARE REALLY GETTING BEH ND IT IN A BIG WAY!
AFTER THAT QUESTIONAIRE YOU FILLED OUT.
OH
I MEAN WHEN THE PRINCESS OF PALNU GIVES YOU A RAVE REVIEW LIKE THAT
IT REALLY OPENS DOORS
HECK! IF I WASN'T FOR THE PRINCESS OF PALNU I WOULDN'T HAVE THIS PUB ALL TO MYSELF -- NOW THAT I THINK OF IT
WEREN'T YOU SCARED - THAT FOR A MINUTE - BY THE "GHOST" I MEAN?
HUHH? NAWW.. LIKE I SAY I NEVER BEL EVED IN GHOSTS
NOTHING MUCH SCARES ME..

WILLIAM MOULTON MARSTON TUSSHI IF YOU'RE STILL DOWN THERE WHEN I'M FINISHED CHANGING THE SHEETS ON THIS BED
I'M ON MY WAY RIGHT NOW, MIZZUZ RENO
BEFORE I GO
CAN I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH?
I MEAN
HEH HEH
YOU ARE GETTING MY BED FOR THE NIGHT

WOW.
THAT'S GREAT. THANKS -- THANKS A LOT.
OH YOU'RE QUITE WELCOME
The Prince of Palm
Sketcha
SKETCHA
Sketch
LISTEN.
I GOTTA GO
YOU FOLKS HAVE A GREAT NIGHT, NOW Y'HEAR?
THANK YOU YOU TOO
STUFF
STUFF
STUFF

NO NO NO
YOU GO FIRST
CERBERUS ETHICS INSISTS! AFTER ALL, YOU'RE THE
REALLY? MUCH OF A STICKLER FOR PROTOCOL.
YOU GO FIRST

AARDVARK COMMENT

Dear Dave,

You've done it again. You had to bring up mama's boys, didn't you? Now every mama's boy is going to whine and bitch about it. First there was *Reads*. "Dave hates women." Then came "Comics and the Mass Medium." "Dave has a bug up his ass; who knows where that came from?" Now we have "Mama's Boy." "Why is Dave attacking his own? And what does he have against Superman?"

Why do I bring up the other two in the midst of the mama's boy debate? Because people like Larry Hart cannot conflate your thoughts into a coherent process. On Hart's side, I'll give him that it can be difficult to understand what you are saying. Even the person who agrees with you, but cannot express himself as eloquently, will feel confused because he did not arrive at his similar conclusions via the Dave Sim thought process. I'm sure many others besides Larry misconstrued what you said about superheroes. But it is merely difficult — not impossible. Our feminized society doesn't like the holistic. Only look at the pieces, because if you put the puzzle together you might see the picture, and, even worse, you might not like it.

How does *Reads* conflate with "Mama's Boy"? Back during the 186 debate, you had some biting insights into male/female relationships. Some points that came out of it were what makes guys whipped and why girls date assholes. Men who want to be whipped (I say "want" because I still believe it's a choice; if it's not, then there is no hope) are invariably mama's boys. Of course girls want the assholes. No one wants a mama's boy, except mothers and other mama's boys. The women I associate with, and I will try to limit them to "exceptions," don't want mama's boys. The only alternative is an asshole. Where are the men? I don't think they left. Either they're hidden or their numbers are too minuscule to be seen.

There is a thin line separating a mama's boy from an asshole. "If I could only be bit by a radioactive spider..." then I would become an asshole for showing up everyone. I would want the reward without the work. I want to chase down the purse-snatcher not because it's a good deed, but for the rewards I'll reap. Whose purse was it again?

You touched on the feminine society that we are trapped in. Your example of Messianic Judaism and Messianic Christianity, which go back a long way, are only some palpable results of this feminine society. When Jesus arrived on the scene, the Jews wanted him to kick the Romans' asses and their polytheistic religion. But with most people, either realizing the fallacies in religion or displaying apathy toward it, where else can we find the mama's boy problem? The Mass Medium.

Maybe at one time television could have been considered an art form, but not now. What is the purpose behind every sitcom and commercial? To sell a lifestyle to the mama's boys. "If only I drink my milk, then I can beat up everyone." I should wear CK ONE because I am the ONE. I'm mama's little prince!

What about sitcoms? No time to pussyfoot around — a characteristic of a mama's boy and our culture — with obvious detritus like *Friends*. (My mom always asks me if people really like that show. She says the guys in it are wusses.) I'm going for the big one — *Seinfeld*. This is the perfect show for mama's boys. Now instead of being bit by a radioactive spider, mama's boys are saying, "If only my life revolved around nothing yet I could still find something to complain about." Complaining is a malignant trait of mama's boys. Television cultivates mama's boys, and they want more of it!

What is the saving grace of comics that realize their potential, and art in general? They point out the problems; they don't breed them. Hamlet was a mama's boy. He didn't know his place, he was whipped, and in the end he became an asshole. That's a tragedy.

The mothers we have now are products of the mama's boy culture. You were right that "belief in the individual boy is central to the equation." A tangent to this theme can be found in Twain's *The Czar's Soliloquy*

> "There are twenty-five million families in Russia. There is a man-child at every mother's knee. If these were twenty-five million patriotic mothers, they would teach these man-children daily, saying: 'Remember this, take it to heart, live by it, and die for it if necessary: that our patriotism is medieval, outworn, obsolete; that the modern patriotism, the true patriotism, the only rational patriotism is loyalty to the Nation ALL the time, loyalty to the Government when it deserves it.' With twenty-five million taught and trained patriots in the land a generation from now, my successor would think twice before he would butcher a thousand helpless poor petitioners humbly begging for his kindness and justice, as I did the other day."

Larry Hart referred constantly, as an emotional appeal, to his Jewish cousins in Germany, but he blames the wrong people for what happened. Who is more at fault: Hitler — a solitary man — or the millions of mama's boys who let him have his power? What about the mothers who raise mama's boys and not men?

To be sure, not all mothers are to blame. Our society socializes them to raise mama's boys. We wouldn't want anyone to go against the grain. Keep an open mind so I can mold you in my image. Mothers want the world to be a safe place for their little princes. However, they haven't learned that instilling a sense of safety is different from creating safe conditions. They confuse the two all the time. Like you said, they are sincere and their motives are unselfish, but the results would be disastrous. My mom can tell me to be careful when I drive, because of all the deer on the roads. When I drive I may recall her advice and ease up on the gas, so I can have more time to brake should a deer dart in front of me. But my mother's advice, more like a lecture, is not going to keep deer off the road. I may still hit a deer regardless of how cautious a driver I am or how many times my mother warns me.

At some point in my life I realized I had to stop being a mama's boy. Fortunately it happened when I was nine, during the family's move to another state. Since I was the oldest sibling, I thought it incumbent upon me to be strong in the face of adversity and new situations. Something clicked. I suddenly knew how to deal with bullies, being the new kid, and other life problems. My brothers didn't have that click, and continued through high school to run crying to Mommy every time someone didn't like them or called them a name. I know I'm going to be lampooned by some mama's boy saying I shouldn't hold in my feelings. "If you don't cry, then something is wrong with you." Unfortunately, it took until after high school to get over the whipped thing.

As you pointed out, the maternal nature has infected society. It manifests itself in the materialistic commercialism of television programming and any form of advertising. The most successful forms of advertising appeal to emotion and status. (The new VW Bug is sooo cute! Who cares how it runs? I need the new Porsche 911 Turbo with extending rear fin so I can beat that other guy off the line at the light.) Society now takes care of children. The individual mother can no longer be trusted with an individual child. Society will protect my children from bad TV shows by placing cute ratings boxes in the corner. How much more of this can we take? When you said that it will be a hundred years before the opinions of a man are welcome in society, I had a distressing image of a mindless group of similarly clothed people, if they could be called such, throwing copies of *Reads*, and the equally good *Minds*, into a conflagration. It was scary.

There is nothing wrong with being dissatisfied with one's place, but Mom isn't going to find you a new one. You have to do that yourself.

Sincerely,
Migel E. Corti
5 Wythe Rd.
New Egypt, NJ 08533

P.S. Despite what many say, I am willing to make a case that Hemingway was a mama's boy. *The Old Man and the Sea*, with Hemingway as the old man, is nothing but a metaphor for being whipped. When Hemingway was tired of being whipped, he killed himself.

B. B. King is not a mama's boy. I think he had seventeen children with that many women and not one was his wife.

P.P.S. I think my next letter will be about psychologists, the biggest blight on civilization and another source of mama's boys.

One of the salient points I missed emphasizing in "Comics and the Mass Medium" is that television sells to women because women (by and large) control discretionary spending. You can sell men cars and beer, and that's about it because that's about the only area where they decide where the extra money goes, if they are married. It's only natural that television programming is founded on inherent female prejudices and mythologies (first and foremost: "love conquers all"). You want to flatter the gender that controls the purse strings if you are selling something that is essentially useless, overpriced, or both. I started watching The Shopping Channel a while back when I knew I was going to need way too many Jaka outfits for "Going Home." If you ever want to see the Mass Medium at its most repulsive, put the sound on TSC (or your local equivalent) and listen to how women sound when they're selling to each other. *They hit every emotional "hot button" they can (average seems to be twenty "hot buttons" in a given minute) and it* works, *if the "(useless) items sold" scoreboard is anything to go by.*

I agree with you about Hemingway Men Without Women *is my favourite Hemingway book, but as I researched his life, I was moved to ask, "How the hell would* he *know?" The guy wasn't without a wife (i.e., mother substitute) for more than two weeks of his entire adult life, from what I could see. Even when he decided to ditch the old model, he always brought in her replacement in a three-way permutation before he made his move. That's just plain gutless, to me.*

❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀ ❀

Dear Dave,

(Do you know that there was no address to you in issue 229? And that the address you normally print does not state the country? Also, I wish you'd get an e-mail address. It would mean more mail, of course, which you might not like. But it would be easier to edit and publish, since it would not have to be typed in.)

This is regarding the discussion you had with James Toner in issue 229.

It is an interesting question what an artist would do if given a bag of gold and told to create what he wanted. (Notwithstanding that you were only talking about da Vinci.) It has happened a few times. Although the support Vincent van Gogh received from his brother Theo was hardly a bag of gold, it was enough to keep him in some kind of working condition for the ten years he painted (until his death in 1890). And that gave us one of the most wonderful legacies of art we have.

I believe that it would make a big difference to the kind of artist for whom the need to create is much bigger than the need to communicate. I used to be like that, but I changed. I now keep my needs to create and to communicate as tightly balanced as I can, for I believe that it is more productive in the end. So I would probably be doing pretty much the same. I want people to get what I do.

Regarding James' question, "What if someone offered you riches, but only if you stopped creating?" Personally, I would advise such a person to get very far away from me, and very fast, for this would be an evil person indeed.

And regarding asceticism: It is funny, I don't believe it is ideal or necessary, yet what I lead is probably regarded by most as being rather ascetic. I don't smoke, I don't drink. I don't have sex (at least not with other persons — or even animals). I don't own a car or a TV. I live in a rented room like a student, at 35.

But I wouldn't mind having a big house and all that. The thing is that I'll be damned if I will permit that to distract me from my goals for more than a couple of

minutes of daydreaming a week. Even when the time comes that I have the money for it easily, I am pretty sure, knowing myself, that if I find it becomes too important to me, I'll quit it. (I started smoking when I was ten and stopped two weeks later when I realized that it was becoming addictive.) My point being that there is nothing bad about owning or using things, but there is everything bad about being owned or used by things.

A guy's gotta do what a guy's gotta do.

(Oh, and by the way, *Cerebus* is better than ever, in every way.)

Much love,
Eolake Stobblehouse
Sorgenfrivej 3
2800 Lyngby
Denmark

Glad you're enjoying the book.

It's an interesting distinction that you draw, between creating and communicating. It's certainly one of the things I experience a lot in doing Cerebus. *"Will they get this?": the question I asked myself very often in the early days — really searching for a "yes" or "no" answer when I asked It — has gradually been replaced by "What will they make of this?"— a far more rhetorical query. Once I answer myself with another question — "What will* who *make of this?" — the whole line of inquiry seems a moot point, and I just move on to the next panel, page, or issue. I'm not sure what to make of that, but, well, there you go.*

❄❄❄❄❄❄❄❄❄

Dear Dave,

Space is limited as I'm trying to be brief: my MSC finals (Theoretical Physics) start in under 36 hours. So this combines stress release with catching up.

Don't take this the wrong way, but I was reminded of you whilst watching a BBC TV documentary on the imminent *Lolita* movie tonight. It sure brought the Cirinists and Kevillists out of the woodwork, and some of the issues raised caused my mind to hark back to the old 186 debate. (Don't worry, I'm leaving that can closed.) Tonight's worms come from the book-to-film/porn vs. art issues raised on the show.

Some thoughts: Main crossfire came from a pair of 30-ish Kevillists, both listed as "Novelist and Reviewer." One slammed the film for making Humbert likeable and Lolita sexually desirable. The other criticised it for being (get this) too faithful an adaptation of the novel and therefore not a true "creative act." Now *there's* a Chinese finger-trap; we curse you for adopting the style and form of a movie, and we damn you for not adapting far enough.

Subjectivity and maturity: I've often heard films damned for their "portrayal" of certain types of people or actors: "It glorifies drugs," "it demonizes white men," and so on. Aren't people aware that cinema deliberately attempts to influence our perceptions of a given scenario *for narrative purposes?* And, having noticed this, do they feel pleased to have seen the director's art at work? No, they act as if only their iron will has saved them from sinister brainwashing. Which brings me to...

Consensus: It seems to me that people *insist* that everyone agree with them, even in the areas of art and literature where surely subjectivity is king. An element of this is maybe understandable (we like to connect to our social context — fair enough), but it strikes me that current trends indicate gross insecurities as to our own critical capabilities.

Porn vs. Art: I used to be a very hard-line Liberal and claimed that it was *obvious* to all who "cared to look" where the distinction lay. Obviously, the evidence does not bear that argument out; everyone disagrees. Is it arrogant to assume that some people aren't looking properly? (Yes.) But does that mean that it's wrong to assume so? (...?) How does the recipient determine the creator's intent?

Okay. Enough of that. Now some of this: I've been enjoying the hell out of Philip K. Dick lately, in particular the *Valis* trilogy. Given your recent discussion with Alan Moore and comments passed at the time, I assume you've read that and probably also Pagels' *The Gnostic Gospels,* which is a pretty healthy guide to the Nag Hammadi find and a very different kind of Christianity. However, the other ideal comparison volume is *The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick* (edited by Lawrence Sutin), which contains a wealth of Dick's personal writings, including his first speculations as to the holographic nature of reality and extracts from his own real-life *Exegesis,* written after the *real* encounter with God ("the invasion of my own mind by a transcendentally rational mind"). Let me commend it to you.

I'm a couple of months behind on *Rick's Story,* but I'm enjoying it so far. Perhaps I'll send something like analysis once I have it all in bulk and can devote some time to its totality. In 13 short days my studenting is done, and a whole world of "real person" activities lie in wait...

In other news: Stanislow Ian, good. Kurt Vonnegut Jr., overrated. Rudy Rucker, soon to be determined. And I hope you listen to Nick Drake.

But that's just my opinion.

See you in the funny papers,
Robert HD Ahrens
29 Edge Court
Gilesgate, Durham
DH1 2JY ENGLAND

Well, where angels fear to tread:

Women are profoundly disingenuous on the subject of pornography. They really have to be. That it "dehumanizes women" or "objectifies women" really amounts (to me) to "PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE REAL ISSUE BEHIND THE CURTAIN!!" If this were really a masculine society, there would be a minimum of 15 or 20 hard-core pornography channels available through my local cable company ("All Hard-Core Porno! 24 hours a day!"). That pornography "dehumanizes" or "objectifies" women pales to insignificance as a debating point when placed alongside the fact that it has the po-

tential to make women irrelevant and marriage obsolete for any man who is disinterested in having children (the more so since most of the G-7 countries have determined that children are female possessions and that men have no claim to possession — only the obligation to subsidize). I mean, it would certainly require training boys to understand that they have the superior orgasm, in terms of intensity and quality (Oh, come on, "ladies" and ladies — you'd rather shop or decorate or putter in your kitchen than have an orgasm — how good can it be?) and that (a) the intensity and quality are not necessarily improved by having a partner, (b) committing to a partner means that she will determine the frequency and duration of intercourse based on her inferior orgasm, (c) committing to a partner entails a drastic drop in discretionary income, (d) pornography offers a variety of "partners" and variety is the spice of life, (e) pornography can...

Okay, let's leave that alone in favour of an extrapolation: what happens when "virtual sex" becomes a reality and a widely available reality? At that point I think that women really will become virtually irrelevant, and their protests that they are being "dehumanized" and "objectified" will become just so much background static in the masculine world.

I really don't think much about this stuff anymore, but I did spend a number of years working through the problem, so you'll forgive me, I hope, if I belabour this a little bit.

*For me, women — real flesh-and-blood women — provide an aesthetic moment. A beautiful woman, nicely dressed, poised, graceful, is definitely worth stopping and looking at. The analogy I draw at this point is that marijuana smells better than it tastes, and it tastes better than it feels. Once you move, as a man, beyond the gratification provided by the aesthetic moment ("Man, would you look at that?"), women have priced themselves out of the market (as it were) with their Oprah-inspired lists of emotional and material "needs." I think this is the source of their preference for assholes that is so inexplicable to most nice guys. That is, women know, at a very fundamental level, that they have priced themselves out of the market — that, as beings, they are not worth anywhere (*anywhere!*) near the time and trouble that they have learned to demand in the last thirty years. They are bitchy, opinionated, irrational They don't like themselves or each other, and, I think, a lot of them choose assholes as a way of acknowledging that. It's not that they have* low *self-esteem, it is that they have* accurate *self-esteem. Compared to how they look and the size of their breasts and the shape of their ass, they really don't have much to offer but grief. Knowing this, being with a nice guy only makes the condition worse. No matter how execrably they behave, he will just "take it" — and take it and take it. They choose someone they don't have to measure up to, someone who gives them exactly what they know they deserve: nothing — and someone who takes whatever he wants: anything and everything.*

I have been a nice guy and (Lord knows) I have been an asshole, and from where I sit, neither has very much to recommend it as a way of life. Good conventional liberal thinking points in the direction of a compromise between the two. The problem I found with that is that the relationship becomes a 24-hour-a-day job when I attempt it. Every word out of my mouth has to be assessed on the "nice guy or asshole?" scale. Too much "nice guy" and I become just a prop in her play. Too much "asshole" and she just becomes a prop in mine. Ultimately, the whole thing breaks down under the laws which govern diminishing returns — a kind of gender entropy. To continue to be a nice guy (when I have attempted it) requires debating everything at excruciating length and then giving in, or just giving in to save myself from having to debate everything at excruciating length

At the opposite extreme, being in a relationship where I tell her, basically, "You'll do what you're told" (not that tough, guys. Most women are aching for someone to tell them what to do, since they've all been raised by mothers and fathers who didn't dare tell them what to do and they're all miserable as a result) is no great time-saving device, since then you have to tell her what to do 24 hours a day.

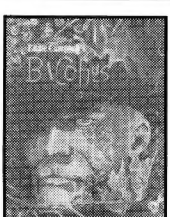
To me, there is always the time constraint. How long is this going to go on for? If I'm being an asshole, the time pressure comes from boredom more than anything else — and jealousy. I want to experience the interest in someone that she has in me.

When I'm being a nice guy, the time pressure comes from giving in once too often, debating far too much, postponing debates where I won't give in, and just generally using up way too much time and energy that could be put to more fruitful use elsewhere.

Now, I have no idea if I am, like, the only guy on the planet who has worked through this whole problem and come to the conclusion that the game is not worth the candle. If I were to judge by popular music, newspapers, television entertainment, and documentaries, and newscasts, as well as virtually all religious propaganda, I would guess that I am (one of the reasons I tend to go on at such great length, as I've said before). I have just missed the boat, I am just clueless or backward or profoundly ignorant. The only reason that a man has to live is to find his significant other and enter into lifelong co-dependency. It's not giving in; it's compromise.

My personal opinion about pornography is that the individual man is well-served in keeping it confined. A guy who is whacking off five times a day, in my opinion, has the same problem as an alcoholic. But I do think that even the guy who is whacking off five times a day has made a better decision, ethically and reasonably, than the guy who hands over his disposable income to his wife and only gets laid when she wants him to — quite apart from all of the things that he has to give in to or agree to that he finds either ethically unsound or personally repugnant. I mean, maybe I am *missing something here. There are so many marriages out there, they have to have some appeal for men. I didn't experience anything in my own marriage that was sufficiently appealing, nor have any of the multitudinous rave reviews of marriage in the various media "struck a chord" with me. I don't resent my ex-wife, the women I have had relationships with, or the female population at large. I just think the whole relationship thing is structurally and ethically unsound.*

BACchus



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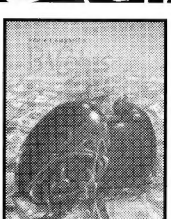

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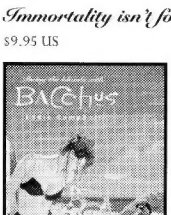

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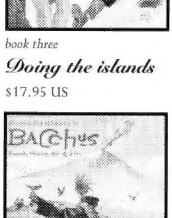

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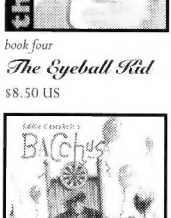

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Immortality isn't forever tells what happened to the Greek gods. Introduces Bacchus, Joe Theseus and the Eyeball Kid.

The Gods of Business Joe Theseus and the Eyeball Kid get buggered around by the Telchines.

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The Eyeball Kid: One, Two, Three The Kid is down and out and wasted after the events at the top. Seeks vengeance on the Telchines. Hermes is here, too. Ed (*The End of the Century Club*) Hillyer is the artist.

Earth, Water, Air and Fire Another big story. Bacchus, Joe Theseus and the Kid are seen all together for the first time. Villains include Skylla, the Kabeiroi and Vinnie Bosanova. Introduces the Anchovy.

The 1,001 Nights of Bacchus Bacchus is gloomy without his old pal, Simpson, in this suite of short stories.

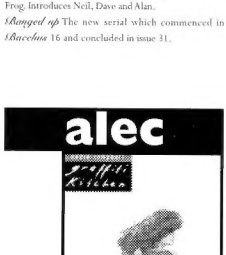
Hermes versus the Eyeball Kid with Joe Theseus, the Fate Bandit, Eva Destruction, Chryson and the cookie tosser. Big grudge fight.

The Ghost in the Shiva (or *Bacchus Color Special*) painted by Teddy Kristiansen. Introduces Big Ginny, Queen of the Amazons, plus Chryson, the Gizzard, Thor *et cetera*. Bacchus becomes the King of the Castle and Frog. Still available from Dark Horse Comics for $2.95 US.

The Picture of Doreen Grey in which Big Ginny, Queen of the Amazons, becomes Joe Theseus' 35th wife. Also introduces the workings of the Body Corporation.

King Bacchus Bacchus is the King of the Castle and Frog. Introduces Neil, Dave and Alan.

Banged up The new serial which commenced in *Bacchus* 16 and concluded in issue 31.



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All volumes in **Eddie Campbell's *Bacchus*** are available at better comic book stores or through his American agent: Chris Staros, The Star House, PO Box 1282, Marietta GA 30061-1282.
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